IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly amend claims 11, 23, 26 and 30 as shown in the following listing of claims, which replaces all previous versions and listings of claims in this application.

1. - 10. (canceled).

11. (currently amended) A label peeling mechanism for peeling labels having a non-adhesive surface and an adhesive surface removably adhered at preselected intervals to a front surface of a backing member of a continuous label strip which is coiled into a roll, the label peeling mechanism comprising:

a first support frame;

a second support frame connected to the first support frame;

a discharge frame pivotally mounted to the second support frame for undergoing pivotal movement between opened and closed positions thereof, the discharge frame having a first discharge opening and a second discharge opening;

a first conveying unit mounted on the second support frame for conveying the continuous label strip in a first direction;

a label peeling member for contacting a rear surface of the backing member when the continuous label strip is

conveyed by the first conveying unit to thereby peel the labels from the front surface of the backing member and convey the peeled labels towards the first discharge opening of the discharge frame;

a second conveying unit for pulling the backing member from which the labels have been peeled in a second direction different from the first direction and for conveying the pulled backing member toward the second discharge opening of the discharge frame; and

a slack preventing member integral with the discharge frame for suppressing slack of the continuous label strip when the discharge frame is in the closed position, the slack preventing member being disposed opposite to and confronting the non-adhering surface of each of the labels disposed between the first conveying unit and the label peeling member during conveyance of the continuous label strip by the first conveying unit in the first direction.

12. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the first conveying unit comprises a conveying roller and a drive unit for rotationally driving the conveying roller; and wherein the second conveying unit comprises a peeling roller.

13. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 12; wherein the peeling roller is rotationally driven by the conveying roller; and wherein the backing member from which the labels have been peeled is pulled by the peeling roller to a position between the peeling roller and the conveying roller so that the backing member from which the labels have been peeled is conveyed by the peeling roller and the conveying roller toward the second discharge opening of the discharge frame.

14. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the slack preventing member comprises a plate-shaped body having a length that is at least equal to a width of the continuous label strip.

15. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the label peeling member comprises a plate-shaped body having a length that is at least equal to a width of the continuous label strip.

16. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the second discharge opening of the discharge frame is disposed proximate the second conveying unit.

17. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the first discharge opening of the discharge frame is disposed proximate the label peeling member.

18. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the discharge frame is mounted for undergoing pivotal movement together with the slack preventing member to a position spaced from the first conveying unit and the label peeling member.

19. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the label peeling member is spaced-apart a preselected distance from the first conveying unit in the first direction.

20. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the slack preventing member comprises a rod-shaped body having a length that is at least equal to a width of the continuous label strip.

21. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the label peeling member comprises a rod-shaped body having a length that is at least equal to a width of the continuous label strip.

22. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; wherein the label peeling member comprises a roller mounted for undergoing rotation, the roller having a length that is at least equal to a width of the continuous label strip.

23. (currently amended) A label printer apparatus comprising: a label peeling mechanism according to claim 11; and a print head supported by the first support frame of the label printing mechanism for printing on the non-adhesive surfaces of the labels.

24. (previously presented) A label printer apparatus according to claim 23; wherein the non-adhesive surface of each of the labels comprises a printable surface made of a thermal coloring layer.

25. (previously presented) A label printer apparatus according to claim 24; wherein the first conveying unit comprises a platen roller disposed proximate the slack preventing member for contacting a surface of the print head that performs thermal printing on the printable surfaces of the labels, and a rotation drive unit for rotationally driving the platen roller.

26. (currently amended) A label peeling mechanism comprising:

a first support frame;

a second support frame connected to the first support frame;

peeling means mounted on the second support frame for peeling adhesive backed labels from a backing member of a continuous label strip;

conveying means mounted on the second support frame for conveying the continuous label strip to the peeling means;

a discharge frame pivotally mounted to the second support frame for undergoing pivotal movement between opened and closed positions thereof, the discharge frame having a discharge opening for discharging the adhesive backed labels peeled by the peeling means from the backing member of the continuous label strip; and

slack preventing means integral with the discharge frame for suppressing slack of the continuous label strip when the discharge frame is in the closed position and as the adhesive backed labels are peeled by the peeling means from the backing member of the continuous label strip.

27. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 26; wherein the slack preventing means is disposed opposite to and confronts a surface portion

of each of the adhesive backed labels disposed between the conveying means and the peeling means as the continuous label strip is conveyed to the peeling means.

28. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 26; wherein the discharge frame comprises a unitary frame structure and the peeling means comprises a portion of the unitary frame structure.

29. (previously presented) A label peeling mechanism according to claim 28; wherein the portion of the unitary frame structure corresponding to the peeling means and at least another portion of the unitary frame structure form the discharge opening.

30. (currently amended) A label printer apparatus comprising: a label peeling mechanism according to claim 26; and a print head mounted on the first support frame of the label peeling mechanism for printing on a surface of each of the adhesive backed labels.

31. (previously presented) A label printer apparatus according to claim 30; wherein the print head is disposed at a position relative to the peeling means so that the print head prints on the surface of each of the adhesive

backed labels before the adhesive backed labels are peeled from the backing member of the continuous label strip by the peeling means.